Faro *Communiqué*

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Almašani Takes Europe

It is an award recognising the work of the local community and how Serbia leads the way in Faro implementation

Novi Sad's Association "Almašani" from Novi Sad has received two major awards, the Costa Carass Gold Medal for civil society organisations in the field of cultural heritage and the Europa Nostra award for its outstanding work in preserving cultural heritage. For Europa Nostra it was competing against 41 applications from 23 countries, the association was recognized for its exceptional model of local engagement and civic courage. Over more than two decades, "Almašani" successfully protected the historic Almaš area from aggressive urban development and convinced authorities of the need for heritage protection leading to a very significant restoration project. Association president Marijan Majin expressed pride and responsibility for the recognition, emphasizing the power of community action. As a special dedication to this wonderful heritage community the images in this edition are from work it initiated, reflecting its own people and beyond 'Who is my Neighbour' by photographer Darius Petrulis, capturing the hopes of neighbours across Dublin, Kaunas and Novi Sad.

Who Benefits from Heritage?

A Dublin community reclaims the story of its 1970s housing estates — before it's too late

A 1970s public housing complex in Loughlinstown, Dublin sit within a landscape of parkland and streams. As the estates approach their fiftieth anniversary in 2027, parts of the landscape and housing are now at risk due to wear and tear. The

work was initiated following the Council of Europe participation at the community event, Heritage and Art in Community, hosted by the EUROFOUND Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions last autumn. These estates were designed by the architect Herbert Unger, who had escaped Nazi Germany and settled in Ireland. Unger's integration of landscape into public housing is a story that has never been fully told. The project adopts a community arts approach, placing residents as the primary experts on their environment, and connects spatial justice and heritage under the principles of the Faro Convention. During 2026, a digital memory map is developed by Blue Drum and the University College Dublin School of Architecture, inspired by the work of the Lower Šančiai Community Association. READ

Heritage Com(m)ons

A European Cooperation Project

Maël Lucas and colleagues submitted Heritage Com(m)ons, an Erasmus+ project that aims to develop participatory heritage practices grounded in cultural rights and the principles of the Faro Convention. The project is structured around three operational objectives: to strengthen professional skills among practitioners, artists and facilitators focusing on listening, mediation and cooperation; to experiment with and analyse concrete methodologies through participatory inventories, collective storytelling and intergenerational approaches; and to capitalise on and disseminate learning outcomes to produce transferable resources at European level. The project will involve a cycle of three activities: research-action process, professional workshops and cross-training and dissemination.

Platform Faro Holland

Will the Real Heritage Stand Up?

In a thought-provoking blog for the Dutch Platform Faro, Thierry van Vugt reflects on how the Faro Convention is reshaping our understanding of heritage beyond monuments and historic sites. Drawing on the example of Gouda, he explores how places gain meaning not just through their physical form, but through the people who use, care for and reinterpret them.

From former industrial sites transformed by community action to the diverse cultural traditions of a multicultural city, heritage emerges as something lived, shared and constantly evolving. The piece raises important questions about inclusion, identity and co-ownership — challenging us to think about whose voices are heard in defining heritage today. READ

Faro Italia

XII Meeting: Rome

Faro connects heritage, community participation and sustainable territorial development

Faro Italia's XII Meeting brought together heritage communities, institutions and professionals in Rome to reflect on the role of participatory heritage in territorial regeneration. The morning round table focused on "Heritage communities and regeneration of inner areas: tools, experiences and policies in light of the Faro Convention." Contributions explored rural and inner-area development, cultural rights, participatory practices and the relationship between heritage and public policy. The afternoon XII Meeting of the Faro Italy Network, facilitated by representatives from CNR and Europa Nostra, provided space to share experiences, strengthen collaboration and plan for the future development of heritage communities across Italy.

Congress of Heritage Education, Madrid

Universitat Jaume I Becomes First University to Ratify Faro Convention

"Citizen participation is the way to guarantee that democracies are alive." (Francesc Pla)

Ángel Portolés Górriz reports on a significant moment for cultural heritage and democratic participation, when the Universitat Jaume I (UJI) in Castellón, Spain, became the first university in Europe to formally adhere to the Council of Europe's Faro Convention, at a ceremony held on 14 April 2026. UJI's connection to Faro is not new. Its University Extension Programme has been part of the official Faro network since 2017, building a participatory, horizontal ecosystem of heritage communities across the province of Castellón over the past twenty years. Rector Eva Alcón described the adhesion as "a historic step" and expressed hope that other universities would follow. For those working at the intersection of

cultural rights and community practice, this development is encouraging — a university formally committing to the principle that people are not merely audiences for culture, but active shapers of it.

Work Shadowing

Mihai Eminescu Trust, Viscri, Romania — June 2026

"In the 1990s Ireland sent two cows as development aid to farmers in Viscri. It's time to to taste the milk"

Caroline Fernolend and Ed Carroll are planning a week-long work-shadowing visit in June 2026 for Irish community arts and development practitioners in Viscri, Transylvania. Over the past 25 years, the Trust has pioneered community-led rural development among Saxon and Roma communities, offering a rare and grounded model of long-term, place-based practice. The visit will be an opportunity to consider fifty years of creative practice in Ireland. In Viscri there will be time for deep reflection, allowing participants to step outside their familiar contexts in order to observe, question, and learn. Viscri's living example of cultural preservation, community ownership, and intergenerational continuity encourages genuinely fresh thinking about what community development means today.

Faro and Cultural Rights

Jean-Michel Lucas: From Cultural Democracy to Heritage Emancipation

"We need a cultural system to make humanity a little better" (Jean-Michel Lucas)

This is the question that Jean-Michel Lucas has pursued for decades, and which continues to shape his analysis of cultural heritage and democracy. The problem, as he sees it, begins with language. Writing in 2019, he observed that cultural policy "prides itself on acting for the democratisation of culture" — yet this ambition has proven "very disappointing".

For more than sixty years, efforts to ensure access to culture for all have failed to bridge the gaps. "The democratisation of culture has become an empty metaphor." In response, Lucas proposes the Faro Convention as a third way: heritage understood not as guardianship, but as emancipation. He identifies three models of cultural heritage and their relationship to

democratic values. The first — heritage as valuable assets — places the power of selection exclusively in the hands of state-appointed experts. The second — Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), recognised by UNESCO in 2003 — appears more democratic, but still subjects claims to multiple layers of expert and state approval. The third, rooted in the Faro frames heritage as a fundamental human right grounded in open, participatory discussion — what Lucas terms "cultural heritage through discussion". READ

European Heritage Days 2026

'Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine' is the theme to reflect on the importance of protecting our cultural heritage in the face of modern challenges such as climate change and digitalisation. Across the continent, events will highlight risks to our heritage but also showcase inspiring stories of how individuals and communities are reviving traditions, resisting threats, and reimagining ways to engage with heritage. READ

Coffee Talk

Faro Coffee talk to share our experience on **Hospitality in Marseille** with SCIC Les oiseaux de passage & SCIC Hôtel du Nord May 13 (Wednesday) at 10am. Want to join? Please register HERE

Finally, an Interview with Carolline Fernolend

What does it take to keep a community alive? In Viscri, a small Saxon village in the heart of Transylvania, the answer turns out to be one stubborn, warm-hearted woman with thirty years to spare. LINK EN-READ

Text compilation, errors and mistakes belong to Ed Carroll. Technical translation from French and Spanish used Google Translate. Photos: D. Petrulis